

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 199751
ORIGIN AF-02

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DRAFTED BY AF/C:RIMARCUS:LA

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O 222219Z AUG 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

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FOL RPT LIBREVILLE 2177 ACTION SECSTATE ACCRA 22 AUG 77 QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CARR, STP, US

SUBJ: DETENTION OF US CITIZENS IN SAO TOME

REF; (A) STATE 199094, (B) ACCRA 6385

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: EMBOFF CONTACTED GOVERNMENT OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE (GSTP) CHARGE D'AFFAIRES MORNING AUGUST 22 RE DETAINED CREW MEMBERS AND HELICOPTER FROM US FLAG VESSEL UNDER CHARTER TO STAR KIST INTERNATIONAL. GSTP CHARGE HAD NO REPEAT NO INFORMATION RE INCIDENT B UT

GAVE ASSURANCE THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER IMMEDIATELY. EMBASSY EXPLAINED THAT STAR KIST IS LARGE, WELL-KNOWN FIRM IN TUNA FISHING AND CANNING INDUSTRY AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT CREW MEMBERS AND HELICOPTER WOULD BE PERMITTED TO RETURN TO VESSEL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

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2. AT PRESENT COMMUNICATIONS WITH GSTP ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. THERE

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IS NO DIRECT TELEX AND ALL MESSAGES MUST PASS VIA PARIS AND LISBON.

TELEPHONE CONNECTION DOES NOT EXIST. ONLY DIRECT LINK IS GSTP CHARGE'

S

RADIO WHICH IS BEING REPAIRED TODAY. (HE WILL INQUIRE ABOUT INCIDENT WHEN HE RADIOS SAO TOME THIS AFTERNOON TO VERIFY THAT RADIO IN WORKING ORDER.) THERE ARE NO REGULAR AIR CONNECTIONS TO ISLAND, AND WE MUST DEPEND ON INFREQUENT CHARTER FLIGHTS FOR TRAVEL TO SAO TOME

AND TO SEND/RECEIVE MESSAGES VIA PILOTS AND/OR PASSENGERS. NEXT FLIGHT
IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, BUT WE HOPE TO HAVE
WORD PRIOR TO THAT TIME. AIRCRAFT ARRIVING LIBREVILLE TODAY FROM SAO
TOME WITH GSTP OFFICIAL MAIL, AND CHARGE MAY RECEIVE WORD VIA
THAT FLIGHT.

3. PLEASE ASSURE STAR KIST THAT WE ARE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO FIND
EXPEDITIOUS SOLUTION AND SECURE RELEASE OF CREW MEMBERS AND HELICOPTER.

4. FOR ACCRA: IN VIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS DIFFICULTIES DESCRIBED ABOVE,
IF LOCAK STAR KIST REP HAS ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR CAN OBTAIN A
NY
(SUCH AS NAMES, NATIONALITIES, ETC. OF CREW MEMBERS) VIA RADIO LINK
WITH VESSEL, PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE: WHEN EMBOFF EXPLAINS SITUATION AS
DESCRIBED REFTEL, GSTP CHARGE MENTIONED DISCOVERY OF PLOT TO OVERTHROW
GSTP IN JULY AND CONTINUING CONCERN THAT ARMS WERE BEING BROUGHT
IN TO SAO TOME FROM ABROAD, ESPECIALLY FROM FORMER PORTUGUESE COLONIES
IN AFRICA. THIS CONCERN MAY BE EXPLANATION FOR GSTP DETENTION OF CREW
MEMBERS AND, PARTICULARLY, HELICOPTER. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.
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UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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